



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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2 May 2008

### IRQ102799.E

Iraq: The issuance and format of identity documents, including military service books, birth certificates and "singlehood" certificates.

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

#### **Military Service Books**

According to the United States (US) Department of State, male Iraqi citizens who have performed either compulsory or voluntary military service may obtain their military records from the Director General of Recruiting at the Ministry of Defense (US n.d.). Iraqi citizens registered for military service receive military service books indicating their service status, which may be kept after discharge from service (ibid.). A refugee coordinator at the Canadian Embassy in Jordan, which represents Canadian interests in Iraq (Canada 20 Feb. 2008), corroborated the information that military service books may be kept after discharge (Canada 20 Apr. 2008). She added that some former Iraqi military personnel may have only a discharge card and that deserters who are caught are issued a red discharge card (ibid.).

The Refugee Coordinator at the Canadian Embassy in Jordan provided an English translation of the military service book (Canada 20 Apr. 2008). The book contains fifty sections and provides the registry number, recruitment department, registry location, profession and rank of the conscript, in addition to vital statistics and a photograph (ibid.). It also contains medical information and records of discharge, leave taken, promotions, movement, absences, training, and any punishments or awards received (ibid.).

#### **Birth Certificates**

The US Department of State reports that birth certificates are issued by municipal offices or by the Department of Civil Status and that "anyone with an Iraqi passport should be able to obtain an official certificate, in English and in Arabic, indicating the date and place of birth" (US n.d.). However, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) states that birth certificates are usually obtained from public hospitals or health centres (UN Oct. 2005, 132). The Refugee Coordinator at the Canadian Embassy in Jordan stated that birth certificates are issued by the Statistics for Health and Life Section of the Ministry of Health (Wizarat al Saha) and then stamped by the hospital (Canada 30 Mar. 2008). A sample of a genuine Iraqi birth certificate in Arabic is attached to this Response (Canada 27 Mar. 2008). The Refugee Coordinator stated that birth certificates are not an important form of identification for Iraqis

(Canada 27 Mar. 2008).

### **Iraqi Nationality Certificate and Iraqi ID Card**

The Refugee Coordinator indicated that the Iraqi ID Card (*Haweea Sharssea Iraquea*, also known as Civil Status ID Card [UK 8 Jan. 2008, 218] or Civil ID Card [UN Sept. 2007, 12]) is far more "useful and important" than the birth certificate as it provides the date of birth and the names of both parents, in addition to marital status (Canada 27 Mar. 2008), and is re-issued at key points in a person's lifetime (ibid. 30 Mar. 2008). The United Kingdom (UK) Border and Immigration Agency indicates that the primary identity documents that Iraqi citizens require for accessing entitlements from authorities are the Iraqi Nationality Certificate (*Shehadat Jinseea*) and the Iraqi ID card (UK 8 Jan. 2008, 218). The UNHCR corroborates this information, describing the Nationality Certificate and Iraqi ID Card as "the most essential forms of documentation" (UN Sept. 2007, 12). According to a UNHCR report, these documents can be obtained from an office of the Directorate of Travel and Nationality/Ministry of Interior, except in Northern Iraq, where they are issued by the Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status/Ministry of the Interior or the Directorate of Nationality and Civil Identification (UN Oct. 2005, 132). The UK Border and Immigration Agency report cites a UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office letter dated 6 November 2006 indicating that documents must be picked up in person because postal service is unreliable (UK 8 Jan. 2008, 218). In contrast, the Refugee Coordinator indicated that the Nationality Certificate is not particularly useful as it is issued only once in a person's life during adolescence and does not contain as many security features as the Iraqi ID Card (Canada 30 Mar. 2008). The Refugee Coordinator provided samples of the old version of the Iraqi ID Card and the new version introduced in 2005 (ibid.) when a Kinegram [an anti-counterfeit feature (Identity Plastic Print Ltd. n.d.)] was added (Canada 8 Apr. 2008). She also provided the following details:

In mid-2003 the use of English numbers instead of Arabic was introduced, but Arabic numbers also continued to be used. Before mid-2003 no ID card should have English numbers.

Wet seals. In the 3 Northern governorates they use the "Eagle" wet seal. In the rest of Iraq they use the "Palm Tree" wet seal.

Background print should be clear (should not be composed of ink-jet dots). The 3 stars on the eagle's chest should be clear (either vertical or horizontal).

Cards issued after mid-2003 will have security fibres which reflect under UV light.

In mid-2005 Kinegrams were introduced. However, genuine Kinegrams have been found on fake IDs.

In the Kurdish administration they use inferior quality printing (ink-jet) and paper but the serial number should still be letter-press.

On all IDs the serial number should be printed by letter-press.

When someone dies the corner of the ID card is chopped off and the ID is

returned to the family. (ibid.)

## **"Singlehood" Certificates**

Correspondence received from the Canadian Embassy in Jordan indicates that "singlehood" certificates are issued only by churches and are not a reliable form of identification (Canada 27 Mar. 2008). The Refugee Coordinator at the Canadian Embassy in Jordan indicated that she had never encountered a "singlehood" certificate issued by a mosque (ibid. 30 Mar. 2008). No further information on the issuance and format of "singlehood" certificates could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

### References

Canada. 20 April 2008. Canadian Embassy in Jordan. Correspondence received from a refugee coordinator.

\_\_\_\_\_. 8 April 2008. Canadian Embassy in Jordan. Correspondence received from a refugee coordinator.

\_\_\_\_\_. 30 March 2008. Canadian Embassy in Jordan. Correspondence received from a refugee coordinator.

\_\_\_\_\_. 27 March 2008. Canadian Embassy in Jordan. Correspondence received from a refugee coordinator.

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Identity Plastic Print, Ltd. N.d. "Definition of Kinegram." <<http://www.identity.ie/plastic-card-glossary/K-glossary-definition-Kinogram.asp>> [Accessed 17 Apr. 2008]

United Kingdom (UK). 8 January 2008. Border and Immigration Agency. *Country of Origin Information Report: Iraq*. <<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs08/iraq-250108.doc>> [Accessed 26 Mar. 2008]

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United States (US). N.d. Department of State. "Iraq Reciprocity Schedule." <[http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/reciprocity/reciprocity\\_3586.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/reciprocity/reciprocity_3586.html)> [Accessed 26 Mar. 2008]

#### Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral sources:** The Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Ottawa did not respond to requests for information within the time constraints of this Response.

**Internet sites, including:** Council on Foreign Relations (US), European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), Keesings Reference Systems.

#### Attachments

Canada. N.d.a. Canadian Embassy in Jordan. Sample of an Iraqi birth certificate sent by a refugee coordinator, 1 p.

\_\_\_\_\_. N.d.b. Canadian Embassy in Jordan. Sample of a pre-2005 Iraqi ID Card sent by a refugee coordinator, 2 pp.

\_\_\_\_\_. N.d.c. Canadian Embassy in Jordan. Sample of the Iraqi ID Card introduced in mid-2005 sent by a refugee coordinator, 1 p.

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